



Spruce Beetle and Sudden Aspen Decline Management Response

Basic Science and Analysis Assumptions: *Wildlife*

Guiding Issues and Goals

Re-establish forests damaged by bark beetles and prevent and mitigate future bark beetle outbreaks.

Treatments will establish and maintain diverse forest cover and focus on increasing diversity of age class and tree species in areas that are at the greatest risk.

Promote the resiliency of unaffected aspen stands and support the recovery of aspen stands affected by Sudden Aspen Decline (SAD).

Treatments will focus on promoting the regeneration of aspen stands and increase younger aspen across the landscape.

Both bark beetle outbreaks and SAD have resulted in a decline in stand health which has resulted in a decline in the amount and quality of suitable habitat available for a variety of threatened, endangered, proposed, Forest Service sensitive and management indicator bird, mammal and amphibian species.

Overarching Assumptions

For lynx, design features and guidelines from the Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment (SLRA) will be used to minimize adverse impacts. The treatment matrix design incorporates goals of the SLRA.

For all federally listed threatened, endangered, and proposed species, Forest Service sensitive species and management indicator species, design features and proven best management practices for soils and hydrology will minimize adverse impacts.

Design features include limited operating periods to minimize impacts during the breeding season, the retention of snags and coarse woody debris including large diameter logs across the landscape, and maintaining vegetation for habitat connectivity and cover.

Methods – Analysis Approach

Analysis will focus on species that are known to occur and/or may occur within areas proposed for treatment. The analysis will be qualitative rather than quantitative with design features, monitoring and adaptive management as factors in minimizing effects to species.

Compliance with Forest Plan, Laws, regulations and policies

Using the applicable design features, best management practices, pre-implementation surveys as required in the implementation checklist, and operating within the SRLA will ensure the Forest complies with Forest Plan standards, laws, regulations and policies related to wildlife habitat.